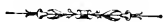


How the Priests Rule Ireland.



When the Unionist Party raised the cry that Home Rule for Ireland would mean handing over that country to the oppressive despotism of the Irish Priesthood; that it would be enslaving a third of Ireland, consisting of Protestants, to the will of the priestly majority, they were met with the jeers and scoffs of their opponents.

Everyone that knew Ireland knew that the will of the Irish Roman Catholic was the will of the priest, whether in spiritual or temporal matters.

Will the complacent Protestant followers of Mr. Gladstone in England be satisfied with this evidence?

During the General Election it was the priests who led their flocks to the poll. It was the priest who acted as the agent in the poll booths to see that his followers voted straight. Priests were the principal canvassers. Priests directed affairs.

The election over; day by day dozens of priests might be seen in the lobbies of the House of Commons.

At the Evicted Tenants' Commission it was the priest who was the advocate and the priest the adviser of the Commissioners.

The South Meath Election now tells us how this influence is gained by the Priests. It is a sample of clericalism at work.

The Irish Roman Catholic Party is broken up into two sections—the Parnellite and the Nationalist section.

The Priests have generally joined with the Nationalist section, and so the Parnellites have only returned nine out of eighty-one members of Parliament.

The South Meath election was fought by a Parnellite and a Nationalist.

On the 29th June, 1892, Dr. Nulty, the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese in which South Meath is placed, issued a pastoral to be read from the altars in every parish the two Sundays preceding the election.

Here is one sentence in the pastoral, "The dying Parnellite himself will hardly dare to face the justice of the Creator till he has been prepared and anointed by us for the last and awful struggle, and for the terrible judgment that will immediately follow it."

Not only did Dr. Nulty issue the pastoral, but according to Justice O'Brien's summing-up, "He preached twice on the 29th June, at Trim, and declared that he would approach the death bed of the heretic or the profligate with greater confidence as to his salvation than that of a Parnellite, and he added an expression in reference to women who sympathised with Parnellism."

This is the evidence of how a priest addressed his congregation at Castlejordan on June 29th. He said, "That every man, woman, and child would attend the meeting which he would start from the chapel at Clonard, and they were all to be there in time to walk to the place of meeting. I not only tell you to go (he added) but I command you. I will be there myself and Father M'Loughlin will be there, and I will go round and see who is absent; and any that wilfully absent themselves without a just cause I will meet them on the highway, the byeway, and at the rails." He said either that he would fire or he would set fire to their heels and their toes.

On the night before the poll Edmund Weir found his hedge on fire, and he wanted to know from the people present if they were going to burn him out, and he would not be surprised if they did after the advice they got on Sunday.

A witness named Robertson swore that Father O'Connell when leading a crowd hissed and spat at him for being a Parnellite.

Michael Mc. Kenna deposed that he had attended confession regularly for 16 years, but last June was refused absolution on account of his political opinions.

Another witness deposed that Father Fay addressing his congregation between the Gospels, said "that the Parnellites were opposed to the clergy and religion, that he would treat them as wild beasts in the Zoological gardens." He went on to tell them how they should vote for Mr. Fulham (the Nationalist candidate). He also said that the man who would not vote for Mr. Fulham, he would not forgive him then or ever.

Another witness deposed that he met Father Fagan who asked if he had a vote, and for whom he was going to give it? He said "to the man who begged for me," meaning Parnell. The priest then called Mr. Parnell a blackguard, and added the hope—"That the landlords may come and hunt the whole of ye to hell's blazes out of the country." The following conversation is in the witness's own words. I said, "You wish your neighbour well, sir." That is what I said. He said I was a blackguard and a ruffian. He told me then he would kick me into the ditch, and I told him, my lord, that I would kick him like a young dog if he would raise a hand to me. Then he said to me, "You ruffian, you will want me at the Last Day." "I won't hear the woman's confession," he said. "I do not care whether you do or not," says I, "I will go for Father Martin." Then I went in.

If more evidence is wanted that the priest is the wirepuller and ruler in Ireland this is the resolution passed on the 7th November, at the House of the Priest of Kells:—"That, with a view to meet the expenses of the defence of the North and South Meath election petitions, a *levy* be made on the several parishes of the

county, and that the minimum sum to be contributed by each parish be as much and a half **as the levy imposed** towards the expenses of the nominations; the amount realized in each parish to be returned to either of the county treasurers—Father Casey, C.C., Kells, or Father Guinan, C.C., Kells,—on or before Sunday, the 26th inst.

To sum up, Mr. Justice O'Brien concluded his decision with the following remarks:—"From a multitude of incidents it was his opinion that during the election the priests, under a strong idea of obedience to their Bishop, did use language calculated to convey in the minds of the voters in that division that their conduct upon this election involved the question of eternal condemnation. The election should be voided both under the statute and the common law."

It can safely be said that such constant interference with and domination over matters outside their spiritual function has never been attempted by the priests in any other country since mediæval times, nor has it the sanction of their Spiritual Head—the Pope.



